CITY OF RIVERSIDE PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Biological Survey Requirements

This handout specifies standards and requirements for the preparation of biological surveys, including who can prepare biological surveys, how surveys should be conducted, what information should be contained in the survey report, and survey format.

WHO MAY PREPARE A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY?

The City of Riverside only accepts biological surveys from biologists listed on the County of Riverside's list of qualified biological consultants. This list is updated three times a year and the current list is available at the County's website **www.tlma.co.riverside.ca.us/planning/documents/envconsults.pdf** or at the Riverside County Planning Department (4080 Lemon Street, 2nd Floor).

BIOLOGICAL SURVEY REQUIREMENTS

SCOPE OF WORK FOR BIOLOGICAL SURVEY - The consultant will investigate the biological resources of the site by performing the following tasks:

- Requesting data from the California Natural Diversity Data Base, a unit of the California Department of Fish and Game. The information obtained will identify the known locations of rare, threatened, and endangered species and significant natural communities in the region and assist in identifying the potential on-site presence of such species.

- Contacting the local field office of the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to identify agency concerns regarding the site (i.e.: sensitive biological elements which potentially occur on the site).

- Conducting a literature search of environmental documents from adjacent and nearby areas. The literature search will include a review of pertinent maps which identify occurrences of sensitive biological elements, scientific literature and regional biological field guides.

- Undertaking field surveys after the literature review and records checks. Field surveys shall be conducted using methodologies accepted by the scientific community. Field work will be conducted at a time when the habitat can be adequately surveyed for evidence of the presence of, or the potential to support, sensitive biological resources.

- Completing any necessary focused surveys for any endangered species which may potentially occur on the subject property, based on the results of the previous literature and records searches and field surveys.

SURVEY CONTENT AND FORMAT - The survey report shall contain the following information in the format outlined below:

INFORMATION SUMMARY - This summary must contain the following information for reference purposes:

- Date report prepared

- Project site location (include U.S.G.S. - Township, Range, and Section)

- Assessor's Parcel Number(s) and any related planning application numbers (i.e. Tract Map #)

- Owner/Applicant:
  Address:
  Phone:

- Principal Investigators:
  Address:
  Phone:

- Report Summary: State the results of the report, noting rare, endangered, or unique species present and conclusions regarding the significance of project impacts pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

- Name of person preparing report

PROJECT AND PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Describe the proposed project and property. The description should include the size, topographic characteristics, water resources, soil types, and land uses on the property and in the vicinity, up to a radius of one-quarter mile. It is expected that the level of detail and the extent of the study will be proportional to the scale of the proposed project, the diversity of the site, total species distributions and the significance of the habitats impacted by the project.

Include a map of the project site and surrounding area from the USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle series with the project site clearly outlined.

Include a map or site plan of the proposed project.

METHODOLOGY

Briefly describe the survey methods used in preparing the report and show on an appropriately scaled map the location of sample points, transects, and any additional areas surveyed in the vicinity of the project.

Documentation of the date, time, season, and weather conditions at the time of survey, site accessibility and both on- and off-site activities including a discussion of how these or other conditions may have affected the field survey results and field methods used in surveying the site.

For surveys performed at times of year when rare, threatened or endangered plant species would not be readily identifiable, discuss the need for seasonal surveys or justification for not performing such surveys.

RESULTS

A discussion of existing plant communities and wildlife habitat found on site.

Documentation and mapping of the plant and animal resources on the site. Discuss any species that is identified as a category or candidate species as well as any rare, threatened, or endangered species or significant natural communities. If habitat on the site was disturbed, determine when and by whom, if possible, by questioning the owner/project proponent.

A complete list of all plant and animal species that were observed or detected during field surveys. A separate list of species expected to be present seasonally during the year shall also be included. Only site-specific lists are acceptable; however, listing of particular expected species, especially raptors, or listed species, may be appropriate, but their absence should be explained (migratory, estivating, nocturnal species, etc.)

Species of concern for the survey shall be any unique, rare, endangered, or threatened species. It shall include species associated with wetlands and riparian communities. It shall also include any hosts, perching, or food plants used by any animals listed as rare, endangered, threatened or candidate species by either State, or Federal regulations or for Riverside County as listed by the California Department of Fish and Game Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB). Discuss the importance of rare plant or animal populations listed on the California Department of Fish and Game Natural Diversity Database for Riverside County (www.dfg.ca.gov/whdab/cnddb.htm) with consideration of nearby populations and species distributions. For each such species, indicate the number of individuals observed on site during this survey and immediately off-site. Include an estimate of the total population present both on and off-site. Identify their exact location(s) on the vegetation map. Discuss the site suitability for each such species. If the species are not found on site, discuss the reasons for their absence, particularly if the survey was done when the organism would not be evident or identifiable. Based on the most recent data available, discuss the known growth, food and range requirements of the species, including required soil types, exposure, elevation, availability of water, season, etc.

Include a copy of a California Native Plant Society Plant Field Survey Form (Special Publication No. 1, 4th ed. Smith, 1988) and/or a Natural Community Field Survey form when unusual communities are found.

Maps of biological survey data, including the location of all sample points, transects and additional areas surveyed in the vicinity of the project site.

A discussion of any additional focused surveys which may be required to address sensitive species, including species which could not be detected due to their seasonal occurrence or for which an absolute determination of presence on-site is beyond the scope of the biological assessment.

IMPACT ANALYSIS- All impact analysis shall include a conclusion as to the significance of the project impacts pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. Potential conclusion categories are: no impact/less than significant impact/potentially significant impact unless mitigated/potentially significant impact.

List all reasonably foreseeable direct and indirect impacts of the proposed project, including potential off-site impacts and cumulative impacts. This discussion shall include consideration of any development plans for the project area that have been proposed or adopted.

Include an analysis of the potential cumulative biological impacts associated with the project. For example, for impacts to raptor foraging habitat, include an analysis of the impact at buildout, of approved and proposed developments, on the suitable habitat of the project site.

Identify and discuss all potential impacts to threatened, rare, endangered or unique species either listed or proposed by a Federal or State agency, or the California Native Plant Society, both on-site and within an area of one quarter mile radius from the project location.

Identify and discuss all potential impacts related to wildlife movement corridors.

Identify and discuss all potential impacts to wetlands or jurisdictional waters under the jurisdiction of the Department of Fish and Game pursuant to Section 1600 et. seq. of the Fish and Game Code or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Discuss regional or City plans that concern biological resources, such as the County Multispecies Habitat Conservation Plan or City Grading Ordinance that may affect lands adjacent to or including the project site.

MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS- For any impacts identified to be potentially significant the survey shall include:

Recommendations to substantially mitigate the impacts of the project proposal, based on CEQA guidelines. The types of mitigation for environmental impacts as listed in CEQA (Section 15370) are listed below in the sequence in which they should be considered.

  - Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action.
  - Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action.
  - Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating or restoring the impacted environment.
  - Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the project.
  - Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

If applicable, the exact location of sensitive species, buffer areas and the boundaries of proposed mitigation measures will be mapped at a scale large enough to allow implementation. A monitoring program for the implementation of proposed mitigation measures will be included.

A conclusion as to the significance of identified impacts following implementation of mitigation measures.

REFERENCES- The report shall include:

Bibliography.

List of references cited.

Persons contacted.

Herbaria and collections visited.

- Current photos of the site, taken at the time of report preparation, clearly indicating the extant condition of the land and land uses with the location of the site clearly indicated.

CERTIFICATION - The report must include the certification statement shown below:

- I hereby certify that the statements furnished above and in the attached exhibits present the data and information required for this biological survey, and that the facts, statements and information presented herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

SIGNED:_____ DATED: _____

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS - Provide the City with two copies of the report unless a blueline stream as denoted on the United States Geological Survey (USGS) maps is located on the property, then provide seventeen copies, two for the City and fifteen to be sent to the State.

TIMING - A biological survey is generally considered acceptable up to one year from its preparation date.

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8-20-02